

Week Ending Friday, January 26, 2007

Statement on Republican National Committee Leadership

January 19, 2007

The Republican Party has a long and rich history of empowering Americans to determine the future of our country. Today members of the Republican National Committee selected a new team of leaders who will build upon our strong legacy and will encourage more Americans to join our party.

We are fortunate that the Republican National Committee will be under the leadership of Senator Mel Martinez as general chairman, Mike Duncan as chairman, and Jo Ann Davidson as cochairman. Senator Martinez will help our party effectively communicate the Republican message of hope and opportunity for all Americans. Mike Duncan is a proven leader who will organize thousands of dedicated staff and volunteers to educate Americans about the great promise of our agenda. Jo Ann Davidson will continue to draw upon her extensive political experience to help expand our support in communities throughout our country.

I am pleased that this team has been put into place and look forward to working with them on our continued efforts to keep our country safe and prosperous.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

January 20, 2007

Good morning. For many Americans, the new year began with a resolution to live a better and healthier life. Whatever goals you have set for yourself this year, one goal we can all share is reforming our Nation's health care system.

Americans are fortunate to have the best health care system in the world. The Government has an important role to play in our

system. We have an obligation to provide care for the most vulnerable members of our society—the elderly, the disabled, and poor children and their parents. We are meeting this responsibility through Medicare, Medicaid, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program. We must strengthen these vital programs, so that they are around when future generations need them.

For all other Americans, private health insurance is the best way to meet their needs. But rising health care costs are making insurance too expensive for millions of our citizens. Health care costs are growing more than two times faster than wages, and this is making it harder for working families to buy insurance on their own. Rising costs are also making it harder for small businesses to offer health coverage to their employees. Our challenge is clear: We must address these rising costs, so that more Americans can afford basic health insurance, and we need to do it without creating a new Federal entitlement program or raising taxes.

Our Nation is making progress toward this goal. We created health savings accounts, which empower patients and can reduce the cost of coverage. We are working to pass association health plans, so that small businesses can insure their workers at the favorable discounts that big businesses get. We must pass medical liability reform, so we can stop the junk lawsuits that drive costs through the roof and good doctors out of practice. We've taken important steps to increase transparency in health care pricing and give patients more information about the quality of their doctors and hospitals.

One of the most promising ways to make private health insurance more affordable is by reforming the Federal Tax Code. Today, the Tax Code unfairly penalizes people who do not get health insurance through their job. It unwisely encourages workers to choose overly expensive, gold-plated plans. The result is that insurance premiums rise, and

many Americans cannot afford the coverage they need.

We need to fix these problems, and one way to do so is to treat health insurance more like homeownership. The current Tax Code encourages homeownership by allowing you to deduct the interest on your mortgage from your taxes. We can reform the Tax Code so that it provides a similar incentive for you to buy health insurance. So in my State of the Union Address next Tuesday, I will propose a tax reform designed to help make basic private health insurance more affordable—whether you get it through your job or on your own.

As we reform the Federal Tax Code, we will also support the innovative measures that States are taking to address the problem of the uninsured. Governors across the Nation have put forward plans to make basic private health insurance more accessible for their citizens. When I go before Congress next week, I will announce a new effort, led by Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt, to help Governors reduce the number of people in their States without private health insurance.

All of these changes are based on a clear principle: Health insurance should be available; it should be affordable; and it should put you and your doctor in charge of your medical decisions. I look forward to working with Congress to pass the initiatives that I lay out next week, so we can help millions more Americans enjoy better care, new choices, and healthier lives.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:35 a.m. on January 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 19 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Telephone Remarks to the March for Life

January 22, 2007

Yes, Nellie, thank you. Thank you very much, Nellie. And I want to thank everybody

there for taking part in today's March for Life. I appreciate so very much the devotion to such an honorable cause, and the good work everyone is doing to defend life.

And, Nellie, it's good to hear your voice again, and I thank you very much for giving me a chance to visit with you and the crowd that is assembled there on the Mall.

It is important for all Americans to remember that our Declaration of Independence states that every person has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It also states that these rights come from our Creator and that governments are formed to secure these rights for all their citizens. And we believe every human life has value, and we pray for the day when every child is welcome in life and protected into law.

Nellie, I want to thank you very much and the Members of Congress there who have worked hard to make progress toward this goal over the last 6 years. I want the folks assembled there to know that we're making progress. We promoted adoption, support parental notification laws, ended Federal funding for abortions overseas, and are funding crisis pregnancy programs.

I had the privilege of signing legislation that extends legal protection to children who are born despite abortion attempts, allows prosecutors to charge those who harm or kill a pregnant woman with harming or killing her unborn child as well. I signed into law a ban on the cruel practice of partial-birth abortions, and we will vigorously defend that law in the courts.

Nellie, what I'm saying is, is that we're building a culture of life here. And I want to thank you and everybody assembled for helping.

We are a caring nation, and our values should also guide us on how we harness the gifts of science. New medical breakthroughs bring the hope of cures for terrible diseases and treatments that can improve the lives of millions. Our challenge is to make sure that science serves the cause of humanity instead of the other way around.

Last summer I vetoed a bill that would support the taking of innocent life in the hope of finding medical benefits for others, and I have made it clear to the Congress,